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TALES OF THE OPEN
FOR LITTLE FOLKS

Virginia Louise Brooks

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TALES OF THE OPEN
FOR LITTLE FOLKS

by

Virginia Louise Brooks

Illustrated by Elizabeth Blanchard Catlin

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VIRGINIA LOUISE BROOKS

FOREWORD

FROM heart to heart is an easy road on which these artless stories will not go astray. They are the work of a little girl who completed them all before the end of her eleventh year, and are entirely unaltered.

They bring the freshness of the morning, the dance of sunbeams and raindrops, the laughter of brooks, the song and color of birds and flowers, the sweet confidences of shy woodland creatures,—all touched by the magic brush of a child's imagination awakened to the beautiful correspondence of outward nature with the loving human heart.

In this keen sense of world-kinship so early revealed lies the assured promise of the young author's more mature accomplishment.

MARY A. P. STANSBURY.

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The Awakening of the Flowers

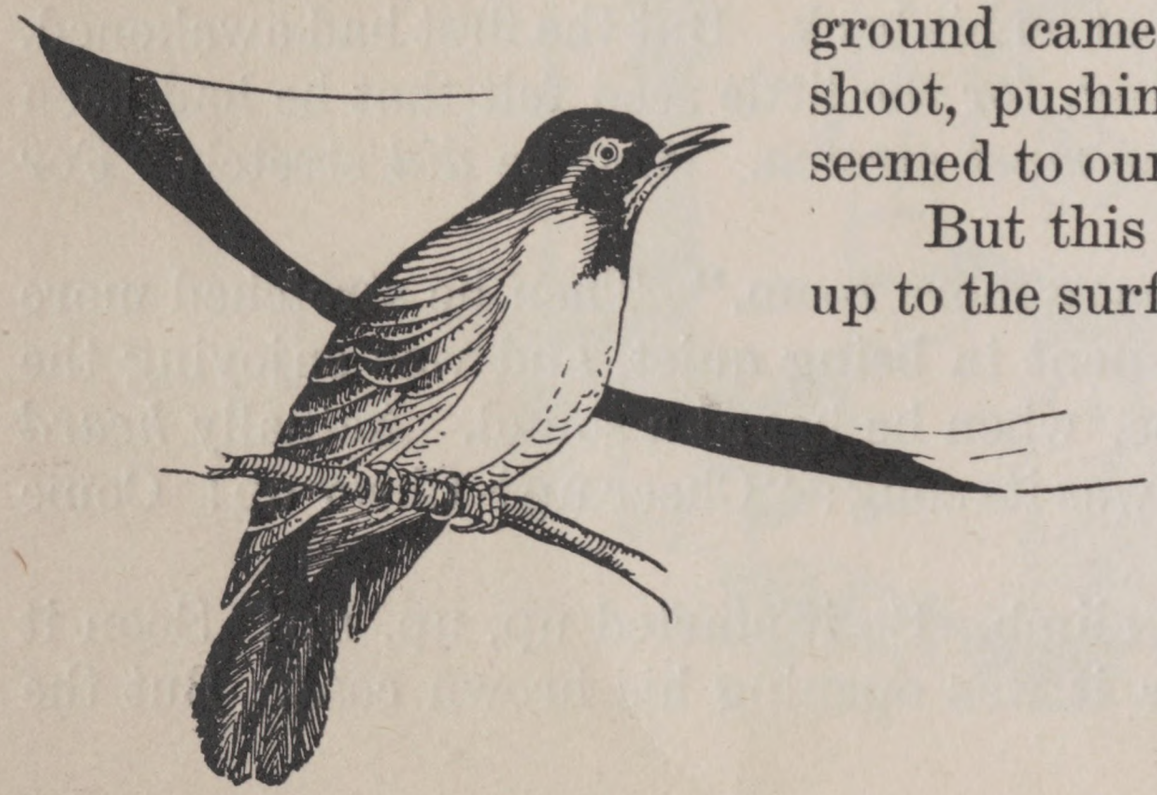
THE spring had come. Deep down in the ground, a little seed stirred. Just stirred. Then another little seed stirred. But, even though the seed had just moved, it had split the back of its brown coat. The other seed, the second one, had not split the coat on his back. But the first had awakened. It was a very happy awakening, for the little seed felt that he had been asleep a long time, and felt as though he *must* stretch. And he *did* stretch. For his coat split clear down the back.

"Ah," thought the seed. "Now I have more room." Then he stretched more and more. But the rest of the day he spent in being quiet, and was enjoying the novelty of being awake for the first time, when he heard a sound. Actually *heard* a bird singing. It was a robin, and this was its song: "Cheer up! Cheer up! Come hear my song! Come hear it!"

Instantly, the seed felt a desire to climb. So it started up, up, up! Soon it noticed that the seed that had been near it was opening his brown coat. But the seed kept on climbing.

It was a sweet May morning, the sky was clear and blue, and the grass was a lovely fresh green. The robins and bluebirds joined in a happy chorus, and anyone who heard them could not help but feel that it was a joy just to be alive. To be able to hear the birds sing and see the flowers come up; to have the pleasure of living on this big, wide, beautiful world of ours.

A certain jolly robin sat on a little tree, singing a joyful carol. Down on the ground came a shoot, a tiny, pale, yellowish green shoot, pushing its way up, up! My, how good it seemed to our little brown seed to reach the light!



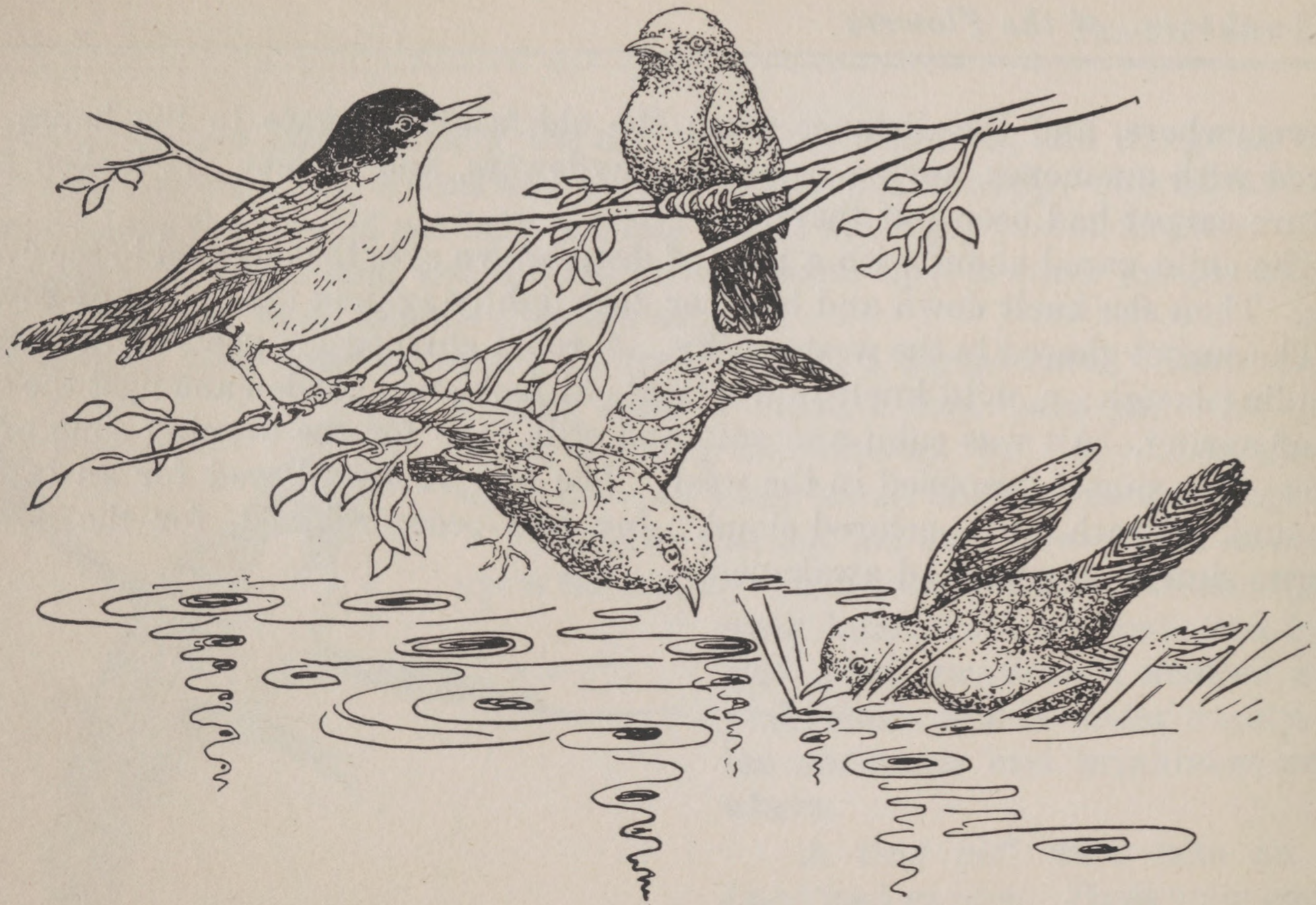
But this was not the only flower that had come up to the surface. Tiny shoots came climbing up. A week later, the little buds had burst. The sweet mayflowers showed sweet pink, white, and lavender beauty, and the anemones cast brightness everywhere.

A tiny girl went into an old-fashioned garden. Buds were coming

out everywhere, and the distance from the old-fashioned gate to the house was covered with anemones, spring beauties, mayflowers, and violets. It looked as if a nature carpet had been put there.

The child gazed about with a pair of deep brown eyes that seemed to see everything. Then she knelt down and laid her face lightly against the carpet of flowers.

The sunset glowed in the western sky. A robin chirped his good-night song on a budding bough; a child knelt in a quaint old-fashioned garden amongst the symbols of spring. All was calm and soft and still, save for the evening song of the robins. The sunset deepened in the west. The ball of fire glowed for an instant, then sunk beneath a rose-colored cloud. Joy and peace reigned, for the flowers, the true sign of spring, had awakened.



The Robin's Nest

"CHIRP! Chirp! Well, well! It seems good to be back to this part of the country! Chirrup! Chirrup!" Chirped a fine fat robin to her mate.

If *I* had been away down South all winter, I'd be glad to get back farther north, and see the spring. I have always thought that the birds felt the same way about it.

This particular pair of robins found it *very* joyful.

Soon Mr. and Mrs. Robin went nest-hunting, and, after much discussing, decided upon a place suitable for a nest. Now, who do you think was going to build the nest? Well, I'll tell you. Mr. Robin collected the feathers, straw, grass, and leaves, and Mrs. Robin wove them together. Then she lined the nest with soft mud. Now, have you any idea what she did? Well, Mrs. Robin had carried the mud to the neatly woven nest, and put it on the bottom and all around the sides. Then she jumped on it, to plaster it down.

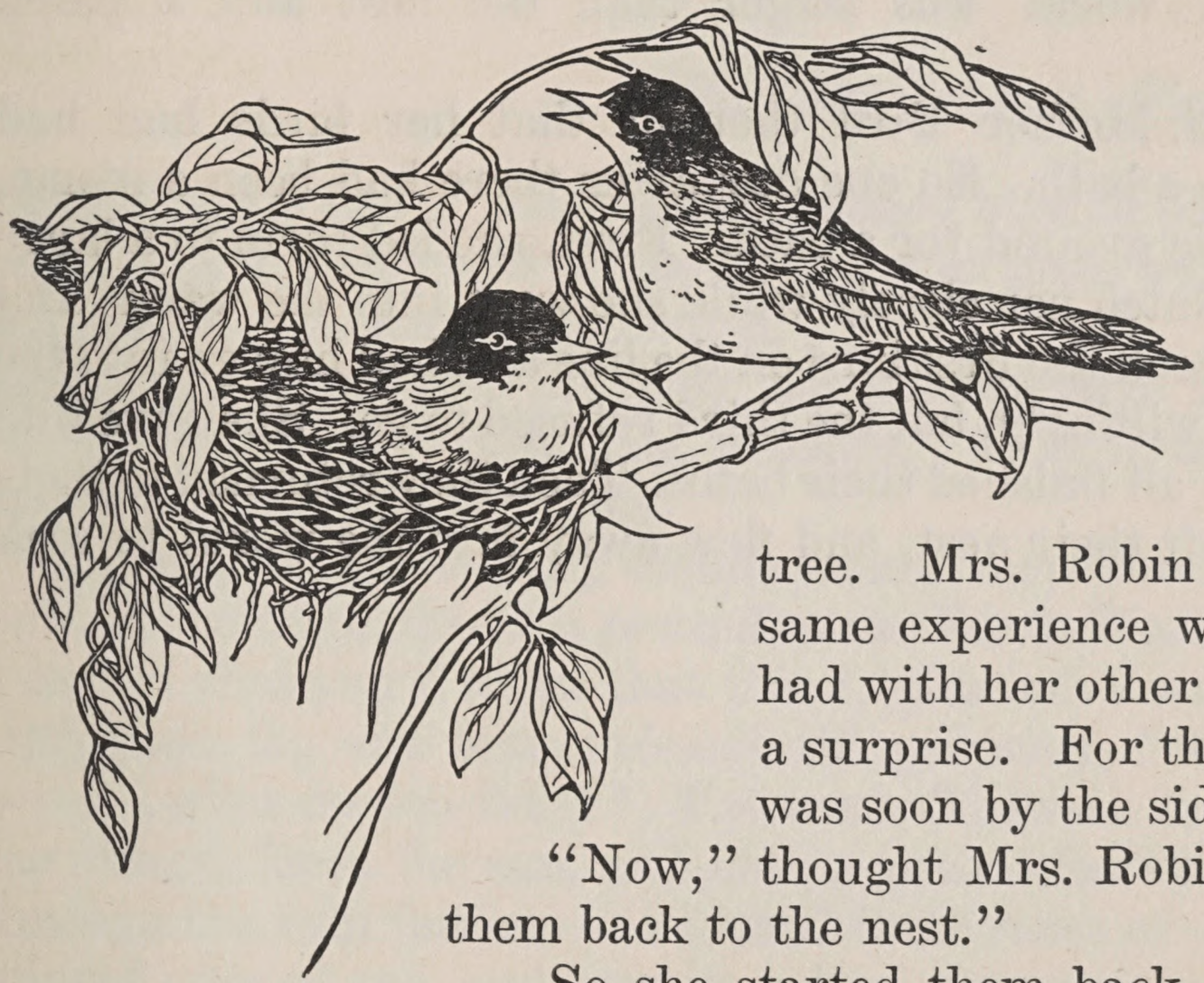
After the nest was finished, Mrs. Robin laid three pretty blue eggs. Then she sat on the beautiful little eggs to keep them warm, so that the baby birds would

hatch. Did you ever know that the mother robins are very jealous of the fathers, and that they make the daddy birds sing to them while they sit on the pretty blue eggs? So Mr. Robin sings to his wife while she guards her nest and pretty eggs.

After Mother Robin had stayed on the nest for about two weeks, three pretty babies came peeping out of the egg shells. No one knew that the birdies had come out, for Mother and Father Robin did not tell of their birdies, for they were very proud of them, and did not want anyone to come visiting until the babies were older.

Great was the father's anxiety, when he was sent for worms for his hungry children who thought that the world was as big as their nest and the piece of sky which they saw above their nest.

Mother Bird was anxious to teach her nestlings to fly, and so one warm April morning, she took her little brood out of the nest, and led them out on a large limb. Then she flew across from that limb to an opposite one. She did this several times, and the tiny birdies watched her attentively. Then she took the first one, and chirped to him for some time. But although the birdie had seen his mother fly, he absolutely refused to go across. This provoked the Mother Bird and so she got behind the little fellow and gave him a slight push. Then, of course, the bird



had to fall or fly, so he flapped his wings feebly, and landed on the opposite branch. Then Mrs. Robin tried to coax the second bird to follow the first one's example. But he would *not* start, so his mother gave *him* a push, and he flew as feebly across to the opposite tree. Mrs. Robin then prepared herself for the same experience with the third bird that she had had with her other two children. But then she had a surprise. For the third birdie flew willingly, and was soon by the sides of his brothers.

"Now," thought Mrs. Robin, "the next thing to do is to get them back to the nest."

So she started them back, and found that all three flew as willingly as the last one had the time before. But that

night, they decided that the world *was* larger than the nest and a patch of blue sky.

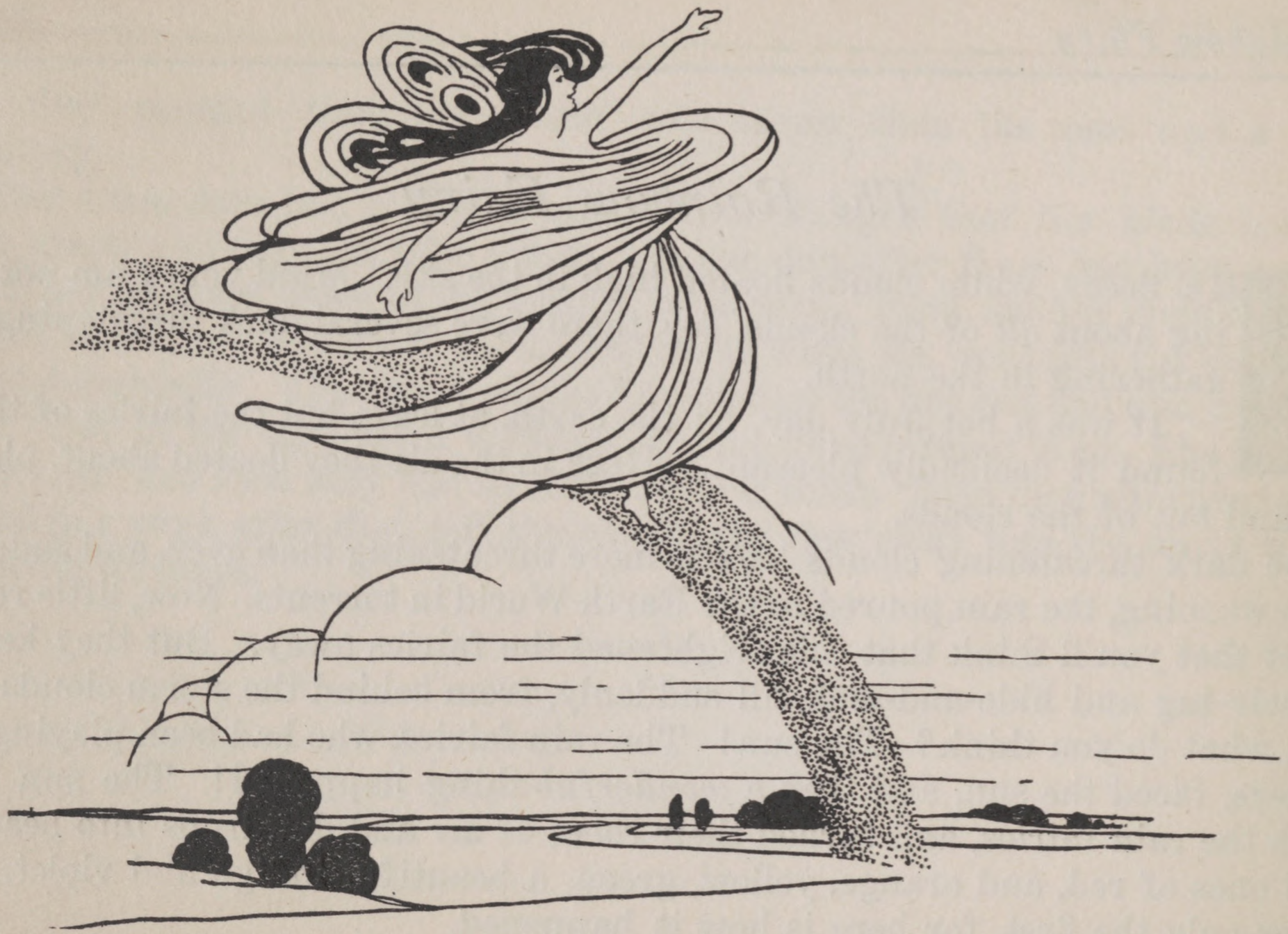
After a few days had passed, Mother Bird thought that her birds had had enough practice in flying to take a bath. So one day after there had been a storm, she took her children down to the ground for a bath. First, she led them to a large puddle of water, and had them watch her closely while she went into the water, and splashed delightedly. Then she took the first bird on the line and had him go into the puddle. Two of the birds went willingly, but the third refused to go. She gave him a gentle push, and soon they had all finished their baths. Then they returned to their nest, and in a week after that, left their nest, and flew away into the world to seek their birdie fortunes.

The Rainbow Fairy

THE fleecy, white clouds floated high in the sky. Mind you, I am not talking about *all* of the clouds, for there were several dark threatening ones gathering in the north.

It was a hot July day, on the earth, at least, but the fairies of the air found it decidedly pleasant. High in the air they floated about, playing tag in and out of the clouds.

The dark threatening clouds looked more threatening than ever, and suddenly, with no warning, the rain poured to the Earth World in torrents. Now, little reader, I expect that you'll think that this frightened the fairies away. But they kept on with their tag and hide-and-seek till suddenly, from behind the storm clouds came ———, what do you think? The sun! The rain fairies, who had been playing with the others, faced the sun, and then a *wonderful* thing happened! The sun shone through the rain fairies, and turned their robes of air and dewdrops into beautiful colored ones of red, and orange, yellow, green, a beautiful indigo and violet. But that was only the first, for here is how it happened.



As I said before, the sun turned the robes of the fairies to colored ones, but this is the reason why. Joy, a beautiful rainbow fairy, wanted to descend to Earth, but she had no way of getting there. So she decided to weave dewdrops and sunshine together and make a bridge. But jolly old Granddaddy Sun came out and changed the fairies' robes to gorgeous colors.

"But," cried Joy, "how am I to get to Earth on fairies? I want a bridge."

"And you shall have a bridge, my dear Joy," said the Fairy Queen. "I shall give you a magic coat made of sunbeams and a piece of sky. Then you can scramble lightly down over the bridge of fairies. Take good cheer to the Earth Children, will you not, Joy?"

Joy put on the coat of sky and sunbeams, and the rainbow fairies ran from one end of the Earth to the other. They arranged themselves in this way: the red fairies were on top, then the orange, yellow, green, indigo, and violet fairies came in order. You can imagine what a beautiful picture it made for the people of the Earth, that beautiful arch of color across the sky. Of course, they did not know that the arch was made of rain fairies and sun.

Then, the Fairy Queen, sitting on her throne in the sky, saw Joy, the tiny fairy, go dancing down the bridge. The Queen saw her alight in a field white with daisies,

on the Earth. Then Joy disappeared, and the Ruler of Fairies knew that she would carry happiness to all that she met.

Meanwhile, Joy left the beautiful daisy field and started down the road to the village. She walked on down the dusty highway until she came upon an old woman. Now this woman was a grandmother, and the instant she saw Joy, her heart went out to her.

"Where are you going, my child?" she asked.

"I am a Rainbow Fairy, and I have come to Earth to bring happiness. My name is Joy," replied the Fairy.

"Ah, my child! Pass on! Pass on!"

The Caterpillar's Dream and What Came of It

ONE time, an innocent little caterpillar went crawling across a sidewalk, as slowly as his three pairs of legs could carry him. He was thinking regretfully of how nobody cared for him, and how he was all alone in the big wide world to face all danger by himself.

"Oh, dear! I'll see if I can make some change in myself! The cold autumn days are on their way, and winter is ahead of me! How can I ever live through the long hard season! Well, well, I expect that I'll have to take a cheerful view of things, but it's going to be awfully hard, awfully hard!" By this time the caterpillar had reached the other side of the walk, and started to crawl slowly up the trunk of a tree.

"I suppose that I'd better get busy and prepare myself for the cold winter days that are on the way. But what can I do? I shall certainly freeze, with nothing more to wear than this coat," and he glanced ruefully down at his yellow and black coat.

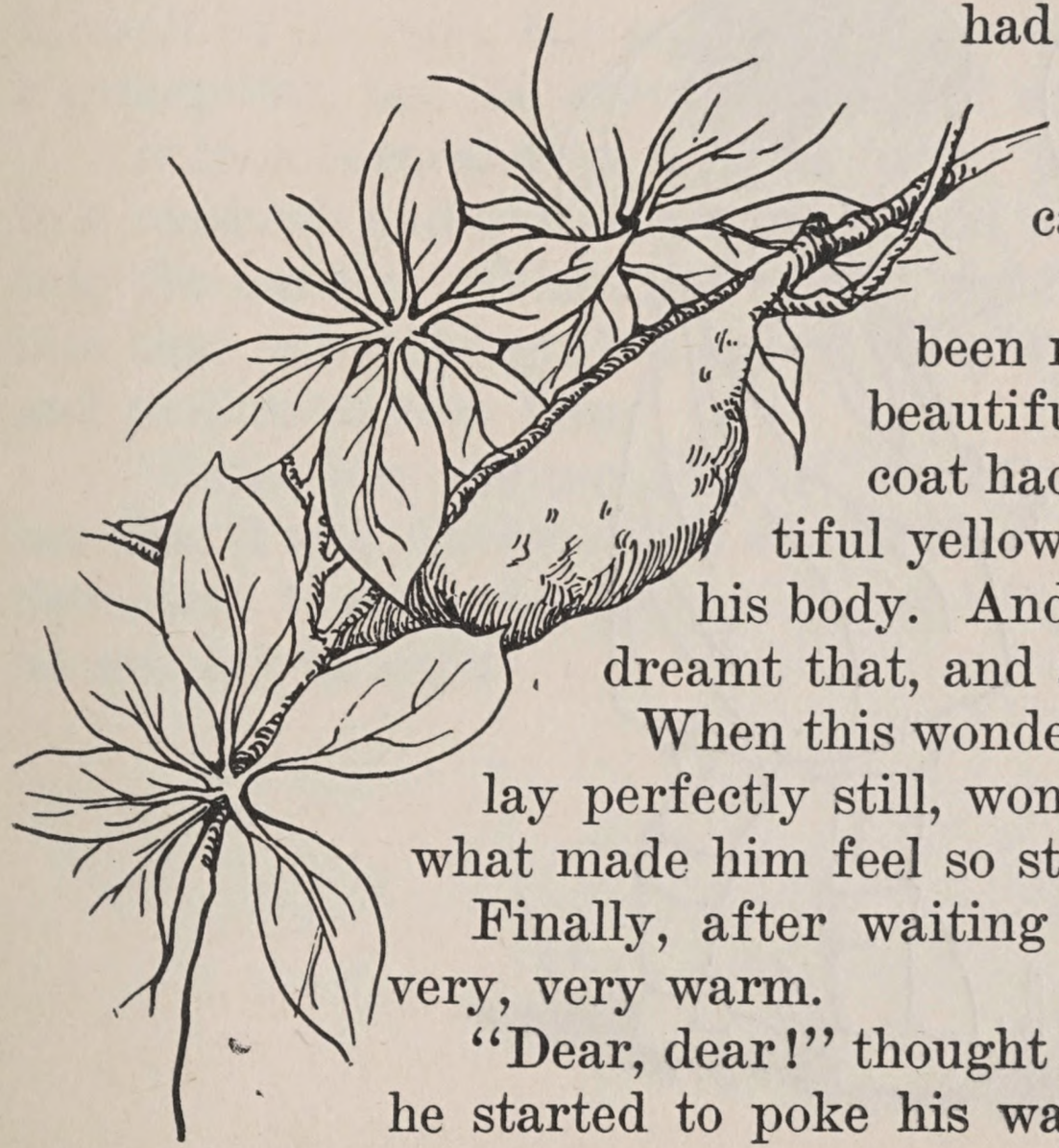
Suddenly, the caterpillar had an idea. Can you imagine what it was? Guess! He decided to spin himself a silken coat, and sleep through the winter.

So he started to spin, in a place which he felt would be quite safe. He had chosen a branch thickly hidden by autumn leaves and small twigs on other branches. Mr. Caterpillar was quite sure that he would be plenty warm enough, if he kept his fuzzy coat on underneath the silken one. For quite a while the caterpillar spun, until he decided that his coat was *plenty* warm enough, so he stopped spinning and went to sleep.

But alas for the silken coat! And alas for Mr. Caterpillar's brave thoughts! For in December, Mr. Caterpillar awoke from his long sleep, and gave a long shiver. For an icy wind was blowing, and the poor little thing was chilled.

"Oh, Oh! How can I *ever* live through this cold and ice! I am sure that my coat of silk is frozen tight to this branch. I could never, never get out, even if I tried. What shall I do?"

Then it seemed as if the sun had burst from behind gray storm clouds, for our friend the caterpillar felt exceedingly light hearted and happy, all of a sudden. For another bright thought had struck him. Guess again what it was! Just guess! He decided to make another coat inside this one. So he spun, and spun, and finally



had another coat inside his fur one. It was not just like the silken one, for it was smooth and of a greenish color. It was called a "chrysallis."

After the caterpillar's new coat had been made, he went to sleep and had the most beautiful dream! He dreamt that the old yellow coat had changed to one of brown, and that beautiful yellow and black wings grew on either side of his body. And the little fellow turned slightly when he dreamt that, and awakened!

When this wonderful thing had happened, Mr. Caterpillar lay perfectly still, wondering what time of the year it was, and what made him feel so strange.

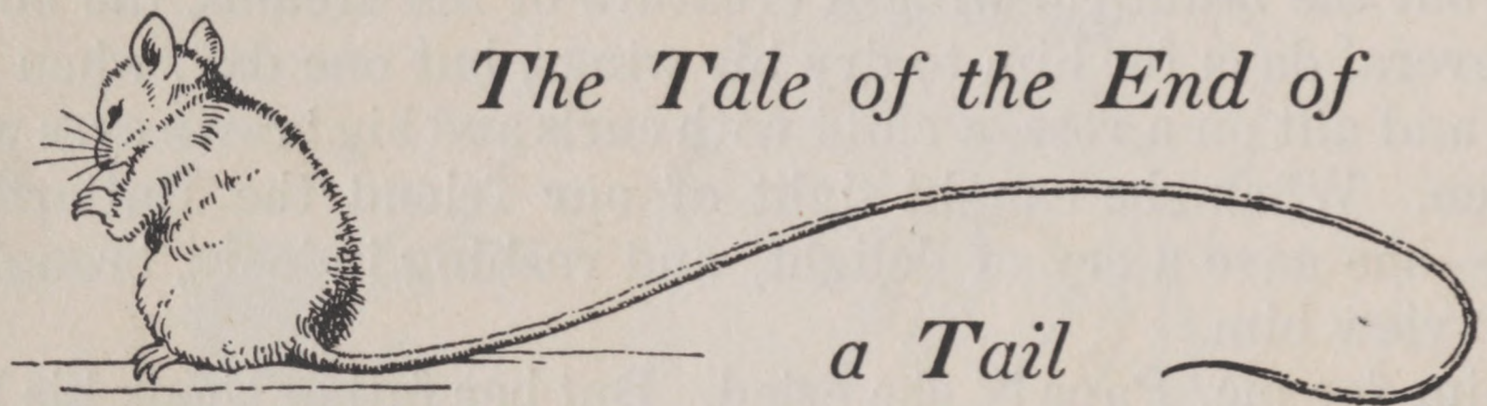
Finally, after waiting a while, he felt himself suddenly grow very, very warm.

"Dear, dear!" thought he. "I must get these hot coats off." So he started to poke his way out. It took about five days to free

himself of the coat, but soon he came out, and what was his joy to find himself—not a caterpillar, but the beautiful winged creature of his dreams, the butterfly!

It took several days for him to dry his wings, but one day, when he had flown to a rosebush and alit on a rose, a child with curls and big brown eyes went skipping into the garden. When she caught sight of our friend the Butterfly—we'll call him that now—she gave a cry of delight, and rushing indoors, brought her father and mother to view him.

"Catch him for me, Papa!" she cried. But her father shook his head and told her that it was cruel to catch a butterfly. So Mr. Butterfly was perfectly free, and flew away to enjoy his happy, happy life, while the child stood and watched him till he was out of sight.



The Tale of the End of a Tail

FLUFF and Molasses were listening attentively to Mother Puss, who was purring an interesting tale out of a big, open book. She blinked wisely, and lifted her eyes to the kittens, who were watching her, as if to say, "Now, Fluff, what does that mean?" or, "Molasses, repeat that last phrase."

The story was all about a great attic which was full of nice fat rats and mice, who were not very anxious to run away, and were perfectly willing to let frisky little cats and kittens eat them up—at least that was the way Mother Puss told it. It quite made the kittens' mouths water.

The tale was soon ended, and Mother Puss and Fluff fell asleep. Molasses dozed off, but was awakened suddenly, and looking sharply about, discovered a roll of paper moving slightly.

Suddenly, every muscle in her tiny body became tense, and Mother Puss, lying on the top of a pile of books, awoke, and made ready to spring. The startled movements of her mother and sister awoke Fluff, and she, too, became rigid.

Now I will tell you the reason for these queer actions. As I said before, the roll of paper had moved, and awakened Molasses. But the cause had been that a wormy little tail had appeared from the roll of paper, and looked suspiciously like the tail of a nice, fat, wiggly little mouse. When Mother Pussy and Fluff awoke, they had noticed it too.

Suddenly, Molasses gave a spring, and landed on the tail. She gave a jerk, and pulled a great, fat mouse out of the roll of paper. She shook it until it was dead, but tossed it about so that she flung it into an inkwell standing near, and they had to clean it off, but finally it was ready, and they made a fine meal, so it made an appropriate ending to the tale of the end of a tail.

The Disobedient Fish

DEAR, dear! Will I *ever* get ready? I must go to Slimey's school this morning, but I declare I can't get my new hat on to suit myself. The mirror won't hold still because that saucy little mermaid is yelling so!" and Mrs. Fishyball glared so hard at the pert little mermaid that she made a frightful face that quite disfigured her usually pretty one.

"Now, Slippyfin, you stay right here till I come back, and *do not* play with any other fish, for all of them that live in this neighborhood are not fit playmates for you. Their manners are simply frightful!"

With this, Slippyfin's mother swished off, her bonnet perched at a fine angle upon her head.

Now Slippyfin was a willful little fish, and as soon as his mother got out of sight, he cried to a group of mermaids who were playing tag with their tails, "Come on! I'll play with you!" Of course, the mermaids were very shy, and would not consent, but soon Slippyfin made them change their minds, and they were soon playing happily.

Now as luck would have it, a burly old fisherman had been fishing in the lake, and happened to throw a fresh spring worm right over the spot where Slippyfin and his companions were playing.

Did you know that a spring worm tastes as good to a fish or bird as a spring chicken does to us? And did you ever hear of a little fish that did *not* like to "show off?" I never had the pleasure of meeting that particular kind of a fish, for all that *I* have been introduced to are sure to have some way to "show off."

Guess what Slippyfin did next? He said, "Now watch!" and he grabbed the worm. But something happened now that you don't expect. The hook that the worm hid did not catch Slippyfin in the mouth, and he swallowed the worm, and then swam home.

When his mother got home, she said, "You have been eating worms, Slippyfin, so come here!" For Mrs. Fishyball had smelled the worms, so she gave him a good slap with her tail, and you may be sure he never ran away again.

Treasure Island

IT WAS a perfect spring day, in the north woods, at least. Mayflowers, violets, and anemones covered the ground. Birds sang merrily on the budding boughs, and one would think, if strolling through the cool, mossy green forest, that everyone was busy and happy. But, in the very center of the wood was a babbling brook. It, too, was very merry, but on one of its banks stood an old crane. He was gazing into its depths, and his face wore *such* a mournful expression. He looked *very* wise, though, and one would almost expect to see him put on a pair of spectacles, and open a huge book. So deep was he in thought, that he didn't hear a faint rustle beside him, and jumped when a small voice said, close to his ear, "Howdy, Mr. Crane!"

"Why it's Chippy Billy Red Squirrel! I do declare! Howdy, yourself, Chippy Billy. You look very gay, indeed!"

"And I was just about to remark on your sad expression. What were you thinking of?" was the reply.

"Of a journey. But tell me about yourself. How did you happen along this way? Haven't seen you in a snail's age."

"Well," began Chippy Billy, settling himself comfortably. "When you spoke of journeys, it reminded me of a piece of news that I wanted to tell you. I have tried to get you for several days, but I called, and you were out, so I had been rather disappointed, and had given up finding you. Thought you might have taken a trip to Coon's Hollow or thereabouts. Was thinking of my news when I came on you here, and was so surprised at finding you so easily.

"You see, it was like this. Last Hoptoad Day, Mr. Greenjacket, the frog, came over to my hole with a letter. Said that a hoot-owl had brought it from some island, I can't recall the name. I was so surprised, an' I didn't know but what he had made some mistake. But no. There was my name on the envelope, see?" and taking an empty nutshell from a pouch in the side of his cheek, he opened it.

Chippy Billy Red Squirrel
Mushroom Lookout
Woodland Point

was written in plain letters on the front of the envelope.

"Why, I got a letter for you, with *my* name on it," exclaimed Mr. Crane, and, taking an envelope from a small space under his wing, he read:

Mr. Cranchus Crane
Sleepy Hollow
Woodland Point

"You haven't heard *my* letter yet," said Chippy. "See, it is written in the same handwriting that yours is." Pulling a small sheet of paper from the envelope, he read the following:

Mr. Cranchus Crane,
Sleepy Hollow,
Woodland Point.

Dear Sir:

Upon the arrival of your cousin, Cora Crane, to this island, we found that although your name was upon our new inhabitants list, we had failed to deliver the invitation to you. We hereby ask you if you will make your home at Treasure

Island, Pine Lookout, for an indefinite period. In one week, Mr. Hooly Hoot Owl will call for your reply.

Very truly yours,

PRESIDENT TREASURE ISLAND.

"Well," said Mr. Crane, "the letter that I received is the exact duplicate. Nothing is different except the heading, and that about Cousin Cora Crane. And what is more, I have decided to go to Treasure Island."

"So have I, and Mr. Sam Eagle got a letter like this. He'll take me on his back, I know. Exchange letters. Each one of us must take our own, and make ready. My reply will be delivered when I get there," and with that, Chippy Billy was off in one direction, Mr. Crane in another, after having made arrangements for a meeting to take place soon, and for Chippy Billy to see Mr. Sam Eagle about the trip.

Three days later, Chippy Billy Red Squirrel, Mr. Cranchus Crane, and Mr. Sam Eagle started on their journey. It had rained the day before, and that had kept them from going. They were very anxious to see Treasure Island, as none of them had been there before.

"It must be wonderful," sighed Chippy Billy, contentedly, for he was having a fine time. Perched upon "Sammie" Eagle's back, he enjoyed the scenery immensely.

Mr. Crane, puffing along beside them, said, "Too bad Sally Snail couldn't have come. She wanted to so badly. We should have taken her."

"Seems to me that you get heavier every minute, Chippy. And seems to me you're not the only passenger I have. Any secrets afoot, Chip?" and Sammie drew a long breath.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Chippy Billy, showing all of his white teeth. "Come on out Sally. They'll have to be told."

And, lo, and behold, out came Sally Snail!

"Dear me! I have been having a fine time. Chippy Billy, you have a fine tail. *So* nice and bushy!" and Sally humped up Chippy's back.

But it was growing late, and they must hurry on. Mr. Crane was working his wings hard, flap, flap! Mr. Eagle was sailing along, swish, swish!

The afternoon passed slowly by, and just as the sun was about to sink, they came in sight of Treasure Island.

Next morning, Mr. Crane woke from his long sleep with his wise blink.

"There goes the call for breakfast! My, but I slept fine."

Now Mr. Crane was *very* particular, and *very* clean. Stepping gingerly down to the lake, he peered in.

"My gracious! My head looks a sight! I *must* comb the feathers!" Clawing about the ground, he finally found a balsam branch that would serve as a brush and comb. He carefully parted his feathers, and, closing his beak tightly, polished it in the sand until it shone. He then rinsed it *beautifully,* and wiped it carefully on his moss towel. But he must clean his feet! Stepping into the lake, he cleansed them, and used his moss towel again. Satisfied that he looked well enough to be seen, Mr. Crane stalked into the breakfast hall.

Now, while Mr. Crane had been getting ready for his breakfast, the news that four new people had arrived was traveling fast. Bobby Coon, who was one of the first to hear of it, said, "They must each have a list of rules."

So he went in search of Prickly Porcupine. "Prickly," said he, "can you spare me a pawful of quills?"

Prickly willingly gave up the required amount of quills, and Bobby went off, carrying them carefully.

Then, going up to the stately birch tree, he said, "Please, Madam, could you spare me some of your white bark?"

Willingly Madame Birch gave the bark, and carrying it carefully, Bobby went off. Approaching the Pine Tree, he said, "Please, Sir Pine, will you give me some of your pitch?"

Willingly, Sir Pine gave the pitch, and, as before, Bobby went off, carrying it carefully.

Then, coming to a flat rock, Bobby placed the quills, birch bark, and pitch on the rock, and he smoothed the bark out, tore it into four pieces, and wrote the following rules on it with the "Porky" quills and pitch ink. At the top of one of the pieces of bark, he wrote:

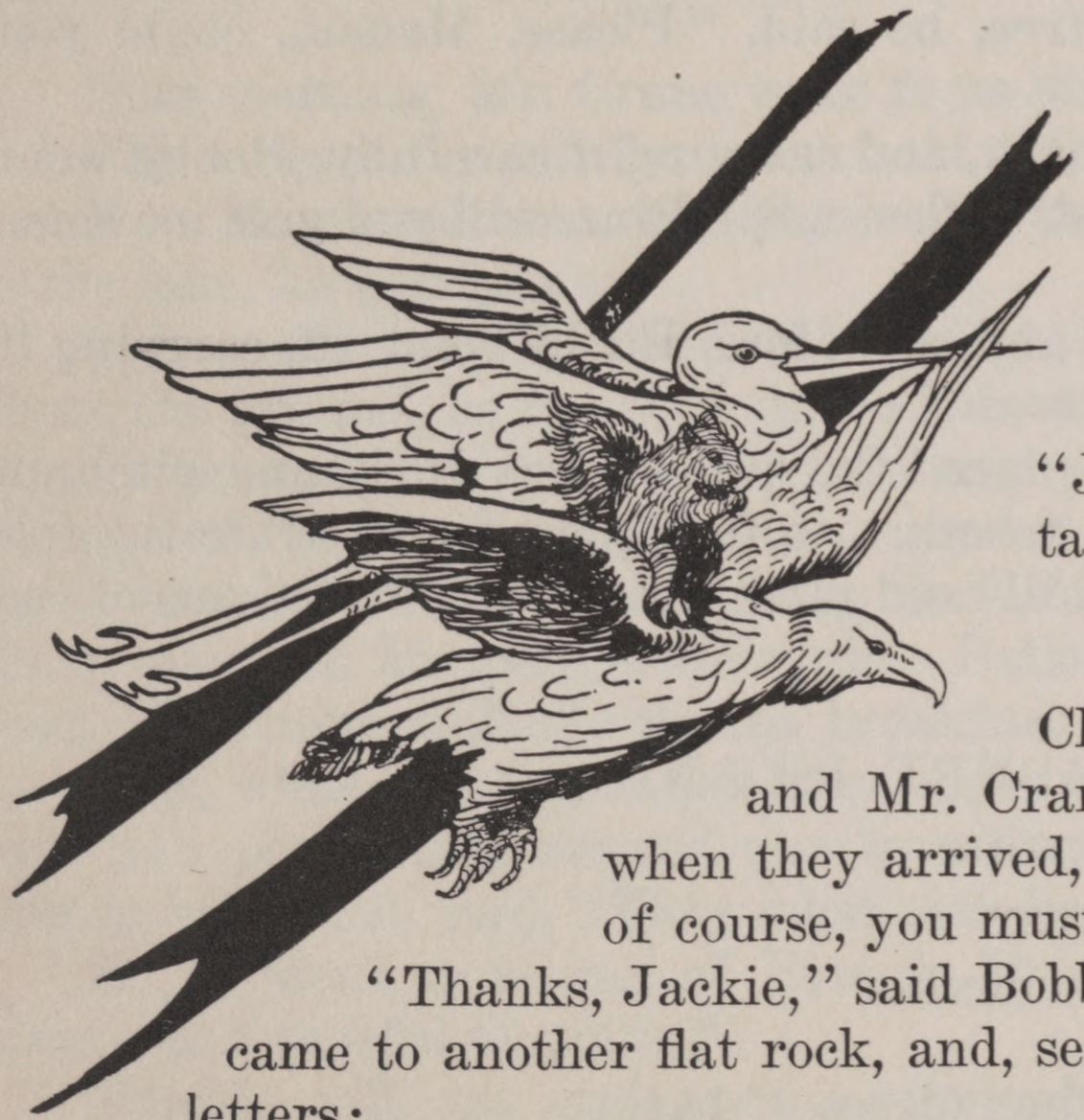
RULES TREASURE ISLAND

FRIENDSHIP

COURTESY

CHEERFULNESS

He then copied the same on all of the other pieces of bark.



"Now, the next thing to do is to find out their names," said Bobby, and, accordingly, he got up and, gathering the pitch ink, paper of bark, and quills together, and putting them in his tiny market basket, he trotted off.

Coming up to Mr. Jackie Fox, he said, "Jackie, do you know who the new inhabitants are?"

"Of course," was the reply.

"Their names are Mr. Sammie Eagle, Chippy Billy Red Squirrel, Sally Snail, and Mr. Cranchus Crane. I met them last night, when they arrived, and they seemed very agreeable. But, of course, you must meet them."

"Thanks, Jackie," said Bobby Coon, and he strolled on. Soon he came to another flat rock, and, seating himself, he printed in rather tipsy letters:

MR. CRANCHUS CRANE

at the bottom of the first sheet of bark. Then he wrote the names of the other new arrivals on the rest of the birch bark. He then set off for the breakfast hall.

When he arrived there, he said to the spider at the door, "Wily Spider, have Sally Snail, Mr. Cranchus Crane, Sammie Eagle, and Chippy Billy Red Squirrel arrived here for breakfast?"

"All but Sally Snail," replied Wily. "She was so slow that they saved it for her."

"Much obliged," and Bobby entered the hall, and took his place at the table.

The place was called a breakfast hall, because all of the animals, birds, and insects of the island were accustomed to breakfasting there. It was a small, a *very* small valley, with a long, rather narrow table running through the center. It was made of long, flat, smooth rocks, placed side by side. As Bobby Coon entered, from around a curve which hid the valley from sight, and made it so secluded, he saw that the four new people were seated side by side. Evidently, Wily Spider had not seen Miss Snail, for there she was, chatting pleasantly with one of her new acquaintances, Mrs. Roland Robin, who sat across the table from her.

"Yes," Mrs. Robin was saying pleasantly, "you must meet Bobby Coon. He is a very interesting gentleman, and will amuse you immensely. Why, there he is now!"

"Morning, Mrs. Robin! I see that I'm late for breakfast, but my watch stopped," and Bobby took from a pocket in his fur coat, a watch made of clay. He had wadded some clay together, and put it in the sun to bake. He had crushed ivy, and used ivy ink for the hands and figures. Of course, it would not go, but whenever he was late for any meal or some engagement, he would pull out his watch, turn the twig that he had put in the top of it for a screw to wind it up, and say, "My watch stopped. Sorry I couldn't be on time." And so, of course, the watch got to be quite a joke.

After having greeted Mrs. R. Robin, he was very promptly introduced to Mr. C. Crane, Mr. C. B. Red Squirrel, Miss S. Snail, and Mr. S. Eagle. He then delivered the rules he had made.

Mr. Crane was such a pleasant old fellow, Mr. Red Squirrel so jolly, Miss Snail so clever, and Mr. Eagle *so* entertaining, that the "new arrivals" were pronounced altogether delightful. Chippy Billy was so friendly that "Quick as a wink" Chipmunk was charmed with him, and led him off to show him her hole and babies. Miss Snail was so agreeable that Poke Along, the Turtle, chatted with her pleasantly, and soon the two were crawling along, Mrs. Turtle promising to show Miss Snail

where she buried her eggs. Poor Mr. Crane was rather downhearted, until he spied a Whip-poor-Will perched in the fork of a gnarled old tree.

"Fine morning, friend," said Mr. Crane, striding over to where the Whip-poor-will sat. From that time on, the two were fast friends.

Mr. Eagle decided to go in search of his new friends. So he walked along the edge of a small lake, and, as he suddenly rounded a bend, he saw an old dead log extending out into the water. He went up to it, and found that it was hollow. He peered in, and saw, to his surprise, a pair of hoot-owls and their family. Not until then had he noticed that the log was not lying in the water, but resting on a pile of sticks and stones. Suddenly, as one of the hoot-owls looked up, aroused by the noise that the Eagle had made, it saw standing at the end of the log, Mr. Eagle.

"Come in," said the owl. Mr. Eagle obeyed, but with no little difficulty, for the log was a tight fit.

After Mr. Eagle had introduced himself, and he had made friends with the owls—the babies blinked sleepily at him, and stared at his beak—Mrs. Owl said, "Of course, you will be surprised at our home, but Mrs. Jennie Wren, who has had

some hollow logs to rent, had just leased the last one when we arrived, so we took this place until we can find a better one."

After having visited for some little time, Mr. Eagle left, promising to come again. And so, now that Chippy Billy Red Squirrel, Miss Sally Snail, Mr. Sammy Eagle, and Mr. Cranchus Crane are happy, we will leave them at the Treasure Island where birds and fish are all good friends, and perfect harmony reigns, hoping that sometime we may all meet again.

The Yellow Pumpkin

"HO, HUM!" yawned a very lazy, tiny, yellow pumpkin. "Guess it's about time I was going to bed, or, rather, to sleep. Must be 'bout seven o'clock."

The field that this pumpkin was lying in was very large and contained many pumpkins and squash. The pumpkin that we are interested in is supposed to be the tiniest pumpkin in the field. He is owned by a little boy of about seven years old.

Up on a little knoll beyond the field stood a farm house, from which lights streamed in the lower windows, and from the unblinded panes could be seen about a dozen children, dancing gaily.

Suddenly, a flickering light appeared in the far end of the field. Then a wee voice was heard saying, "Papa! Where can my pumpkin be?"

Then the light came upon the tiny pumpkin, in a far corner of the fence, fast asleep.

In the lantern's flickering rays could be distinguished the figures of a man and a small boy. Bob, the child was called, and he had an old crazy quilt thrown over his arm.

"Here's my pumpkin, papa! Now I'll cover him with this big quilt, nice an' warm!" And Bob proceeded to tuck the quilt lovingly around the golden, slumbering pumpkin.

Next morning, when the pumpkin awoke, he exclaimed, "Phew! How hot is the day, anyhow? Why, I'm fairly boiling, and yesterday I was nearly frozen! Oh! So Master Bobby has been up to his tricks again! This old comforter would melt a June bug!"

Just then, a hand crossed the covering, and Bobby's face peeped within, his lips calling gaily, "Here, papa! Bring the knife! I must cut the stalk all myself."

The astonished pumpkin listened to the conversation in awe. Could it be possible that he, the tiny, wee little pumpkin was going to be *picked?* Yes indeed! It certainly was *very* true. For Bob was going to do something very funny. He took up his knife, and cut the thick stalk. Then, after the pumpkin had been carefully deposited in Bob's tiny wheelbarrow, it was proudly trundled up to the farm house, and displayed with much enthusiasm.

That afternoon, Bob took the pumpkin in the big farm cart and started for town.

"Dear me!" cried the pumpkin. "What *can* be the matter with my master? Carrying me to town! The idea!"

But Bobby held onto his precious yellow circle, and stood proudly up in front of the cart.

Very soon they came up to a large field, and the pumpkin noticed that there was much commotion there, and people were racing about, and all had parcels of some sort.

"Dear me!" said the pumpkin again. "What is this about?"

But Bobby followed his father, and soon came to a large wooden box, on which was marked,

PRIZE SMALL PUMPKINS; DEPOSIT HERE

"Now, Punky," said Bobby gravely, as he tied a tag on the stem of the pumpkin, "You be a very good boy, and remember to *mind,* and dad, can't I put my name on here too? Seems as if I could."

"Yes indeed! Put Bob Transy, and write plainly."

All this time, "Punky," as Bob called the pumpkin, was trying to guess what could be the matter.

"Pshaw!" he cried, "Why am I left here? I can't see why Bob and his father went away and left me!"

But soon the pumpkin's curiosity was satisfied, for a trio of men came up to the box and lifted the pumpkins out, and examined them, one by one.

"Well," said one of the men, "The littlest pumpkin is one owned by Bob Transy, and to judge from the writing on the card, it is evident that young Bob is about the size of the pumpkin."

And now Punky understood. "So this is the fair!" cried he. "And I am the prize small pumpkin! Well, well! And won't that tickle Bob, though?"

It certainly *did* tickle him, and when he got the prize, a five dollar gold piece, his delight was unbounded. He was just going to carry it off when a man and a little girl came up to him.

"Are you Bob Transy?" asked the man, pleasantly.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob.

"Could you sell me that pumpkin for a dollar? That's a *nawful* price, but I know ye'd want purty fair pay fer it."

Bob glanced at the pumpkin, and then looked enquiringly at his father, who stood beside him.

"Would you sell it if you were me, pap?" and Bob's face was doubtful.

"Certainly, Bob! You have no use for it!"

So the pumpkin quickly changed hands, and the little girl, called Betty, carried it away.

"Well, well!" exclaimed the pumpkin to himself. "So Betty has me now! Betty Elenor Johns!"

The child carried the pumpkin home to her house and laid it on the kitchen table.

"Well, Betty Elly! So you found the pumpkin did you? I'll make a nice little pie for dinner, and you can have most of it yourself," said Betty's mother, with a laugh.

"No, indeed! I intend to use it for my jack-o'-lantern tonight!" and Betty snatched up a butcher's knife and cut a face on the pumpkin.

Night came, and Betty Elly and Punky went out for a good time. Betty's jack-o'-lantern was much admired, and she had a wonderful time. She went to Bob's house to scare him with the pumpkin, but he was out.

When Betty Elly got home that night, Punky cried, "Well, I have had a pleasant life, and I hope that you readers of it enjoyed its record. I hope that *you* can have a chance to be a big jack-o'-lantern. It's piles of fun, *I'll* tell you."

Jack Frost

LITTLE MARY PIERCE stood by the window watching for her father to come home. It was getting dark and she did not see him come briskly up the walk, and was standing near the window when she heard his step in the hall.

"Daddy! Daddy! Have you a new story today?" cried Mary, running to her father, who caught her up and swung her to his shoulder.

"I certainly have, Mary girl! A bran' new one, that's a regularly fine story, that'll make you squeal, it's so good. Where's mother?"

Mary answered him delightedly, and then exclaimed, "It was so cold that Sarah built a fire in the grate, and it'll be fine for a story. Come on, Daddy!"

Daddy carried her in and said, "Speaking of its getting chilly, reminds me of my story. I'm sure that Jack Frost is coming to visit here tonight. My, but that fire feels good!"

"Who is Jack Frost, Daddy? Is he my cousin or something?"

Daddy's hearty laugh rang out through the room, as he replied, "No, Marykins, Jack Frost is the old fellow who comes to see us and colors the leaves of the trees, and such things. He has nipped a few of the leaves, for you see that some are turning yellow. But I doubt if Jack himself has been here. Perhaps his young son went visiting, and shook hands with a few of the leaves. But now I'll begin my story."

Mary snuggled up in Daddy's arms, and sat looking into the fire as daddy began:

"There's a man called Jack Frost, and a jolly old fellow he is, who comes to visit the people of the country in fall and early spring. I can remember the first time that I noticed Jack Frost. I was a tiny boy of five, and one morning when I awoke I found that it was quite a bit colder than it had been the previous night. My father had been accustomed to telling me stories just as I tell them to you. So that night, with a cozy fire in the fireplace, he told me the story that I am going to tell you.

"Jack Frost is very, very old. He has visited different parts of the world for years, and years, and *years*. In other countries like Cuba, he is not known as well as he is here in the United States. Sometimes he comes when one is least expecting him. The particular season which I had met Jack Frost, he helped to paint the leaves brilliant colors, such as yellow and red. Of course, I noticed this, and asked my dad about it. He then told me that it was not every year that old Jack helped to color nature's summer beauties, but he had just come this year early. And," concluded Daddy, "watch for Jack's wonders tomorrow."

Next morning when Mary awoke, she fairly screamed to Daddy, crying, "Daddy! Daddy! Look! Only look! Jack Frost certainly has been working wonders! Just see here!" And she pointed to the window.

It certainly did look as if fairies had been at work, for the most beautiful scenes of every description were painted on the windows. Ferns waved—or seemed to—as naturally as if growing, and their feathery, grassy texture showed plainly. Another cry escaped Mary's lips as she caught sight of the world outside.

"Is it Mother Nature's birthday today? Jack Frost has put white icing on all the trees and bushes. It snowed in the night. It looks as though Jack had put sugar on the frosting to make it sparkle. I wonder how he does it?"

Here is how. Jack Frost comes in the night with his many brushes, pots, and a lot of icing. He then makes himself busy, frosting the world with the beautiful sparkling frost, so that it looks like cake, iced.

When Mary went to kindergarten that morning, she found that Jack Frost had many tricks, and "liked to tease 'most as much as Daddy," for when she got to kindergarten, Miss Grey asked, "Well, Mary! You must have been running in this snappy wind! I do believe you allowed Jack Frost to kiss you."

Mary watched carefully that winter, and decided that Mother Nature had as many interesting things as the most fascinating fairy tale, and that Jack Frost, Granddaddy Sun, Weeping Rain, and old Mother Wind were some of her very best friends.

The Raindrop

FAR up in the sky was a large gray cloud, filled to the brim with wee, tiny raindrops. Thousands and thousands of them, gay little rollicking, silvery beads, among which were little fine pieces of cloud, formed by the moisture, called vapor, drawn by the sun.

Among these little raindrops was Silvershine, a wee little drop, who longed to go to earth. He was full of fun, but wanted to get a better view of what was below *his* cloud.

"Dear me!" sighed Silvershine, "how I wish I could go to Earth!"

Now, dear old Mother South Wind heard this raindrop, and she sent her son, North, to puff the cloud, so that the raindrop's wish would come true.

So Brother North, with a twist and a leap, blew and blew.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Silvershine, "I'm falling! I'm *really* going to earth!"

And so he was. For down, down, went the raindrops, and Silvershine fell right straight into a crimson rose, and nestled down beneath the velvety petals.

"Oh," he sighed, with a breath of content, "Earth is *wonderful!* And I surely am glad to think that I fell into this beautiful rose."

Then he fell asleep, and knew nothing more until the next morning, when the poor little fellow found that it was raining again.

"Oh!" he said, about midday, for the fortieth time, "now I wish that I had a playmate."

And the rose heard him, so she opened her soft petals like a cup, and was ready to catch a drop, clear to the depths of her golden heart, but no raindrop came. All day long Silvershine watched hopefully, and when night came, and still no drop came, poor little Silvershine was very sad, and went to bed early.

But the next morning, he awoke to find the sun shining brightly, and he said, "Now, I shall go calling." But the rose exclaimed, "No, indeed! Stay with me!"

So he consented to stay for a time.

About seven o'clock, Silvershine heard a voice saying, "Come Mother! Let us take a walk in the garden before breakfast."

In an instant, Silvershine saw a rosy-faced little girl enter the garden, with a tall, pretty lady by her side.

"The rain must have brought out the flowers," said the child, and she glanced here and there, with a pair of bright blue eyes. Her long, thick, black braids hung below her waist, and she smiled brightly as she caught sight of the crimson rose.

"See, Mother!" she exclaimed, in a merry voice. "See this beautiful rose! May I pick it for you?"

She ran over to where this rosebush stood, and reaching clear down to the ground, she broke the slender stem.

"Here, Mother! See what I have for you!" And she held up the rose to the smiling lady.

"But Daisy, dear! The rose is all wet!" And the lady peered into the golden center of the rose, with the kindliest pair of gray eyes ever seen.

Daisy would not be stopped, for she insisted upon giving her mother the rose. She held it upside down, and gave it a gentle shake. A shower of drops fell onto the grass, and Silvershine was among them.

"Why, there *were* drops in the rose, only they were in between other petals!" said Silvershine in a surprised voice.

But there was not much time to be astonished, for Mr. Sun was getting hotter and hotter, and Silvershine was changing his mind about the earth.

He passed half of the day restlessly, and then he said to the sun, "Dear Father Sun, *please* take me back to the sky.

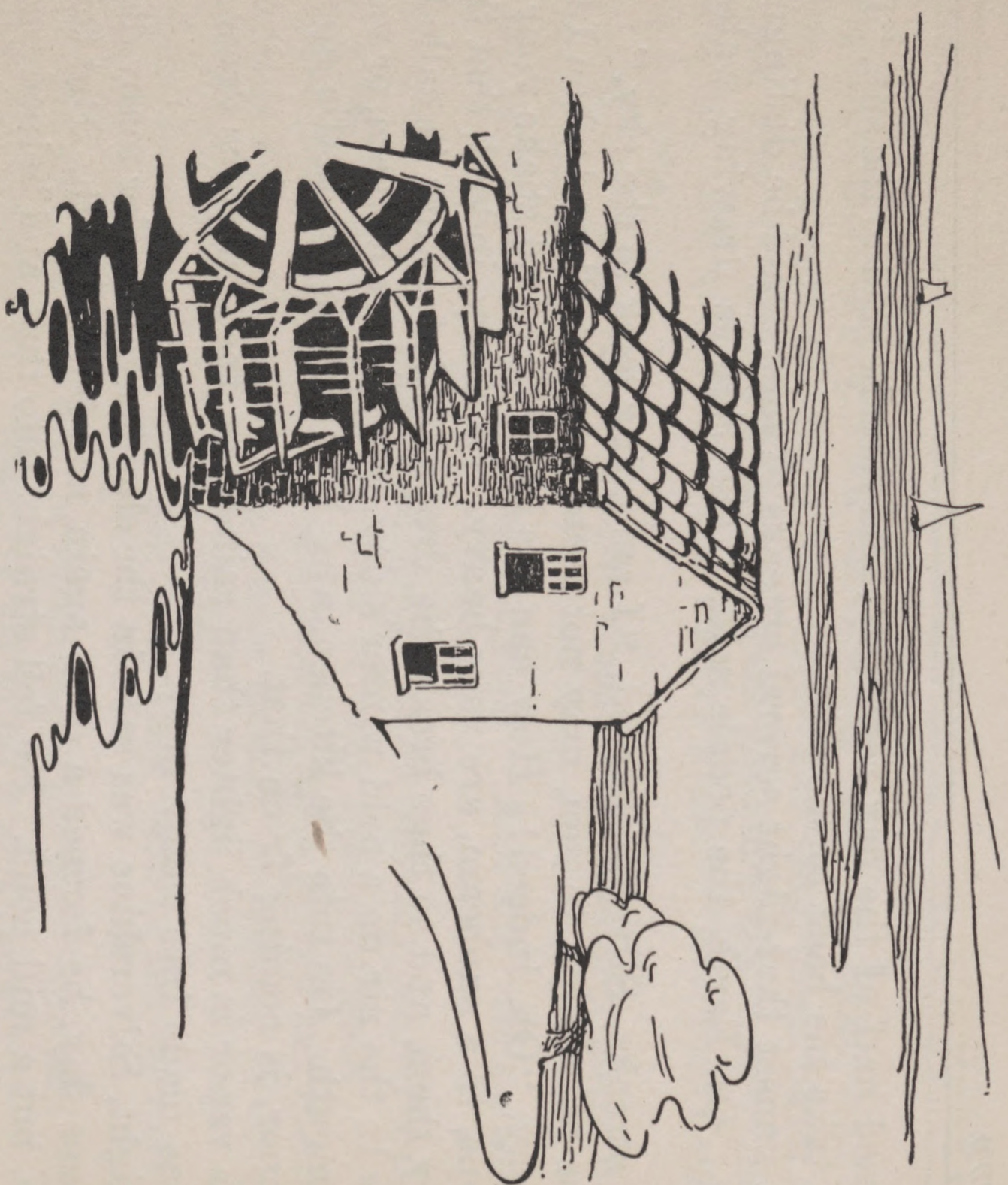
Just at sunset that night several streaks of mist could be distinguished in the western sky. On Earth, the people said, "The Sun is drawing water from the earth."

In the streaks, Silvershine said, "I am going back to the sky."

Now the raindrops, to you, may not seem heavy at all, and when I tell you this, you might say, "Oh, indeed! How can *she* know?" And shake your head. But the raindrops, to a sunbeam, are very heavy. So heavy, indeed, that the sunbeams cannot carry them, and so they break the drops up into what is called *vapor*. If you breathe in the air on a cold winter's day, you will see a steam, or vapor, coming from your mouth. Go into the kitchen, and look at the tea-kettle spout. Vapor, very hot vapor, is coming from that.

Now, as vapor is much lighter than raindrops, the sunbeams draw that, so this raindrop was made into many more.

That night, Silvershine was safe in the clouds again. For many days he stayed there, and one day, he formed a drop again, and fell to Earth. But this time there was no rose, but a mill pond. He fell straight into that, and helped push the wheel



that turned the stones that ground the meal into flour. But after a bit he grew tired of *that,* and so he, with his brothers and sisters, ran off down the pond into a stream. They skipped down the stream to the waterfall that was at the end of it, and stayed there for several days. Now, this waterfall joined a river, and the river ran into the ocean. When Silvershine discovered this, he was impatient to be off. So once more, he journeyed on. Entering the river, he sped on and on. Through harbors, past cities, villages, fields, forests, and still he went on. Finally, he went through a very narrow harbor, and then—O joy!—he ran straight into the arms of Mother Ocean, never to leave her again.

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